

# GROUP TRAINING

ASSOCIATION OF VICTORIA

## Budget Statement 2014

Ensuring a better performing apprenticeship system

GTOs work with **local communities** and industries to match young people with **meaningful work**.

Funding for Group Training is the most **cost effective** way of ensuring **apprenticeship completion**.

The financial support GTOs receive from the Victorian government provides a **safety net** for thousands of **apprentices**.





# Group Training Industry Budget Statement 2014

## Ensuring a better performing apprenticeship system

November 2013

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## Executive Summary

### For a better performing apprenticeship system

Group Training was born of a partnership between industry and government more than 30 years ago. Many Industry Associations set-up Group Training Organisations (GTO) as not-for-profit entities to support small and medium-sized businesses. The goal was simply to train tradespeople to ensure a steady stream of skilled people to support a growing Victorian economy and avoid future skill shortages.

Over the past 10 years GTOs have consistently employed over 8500 apprentices and trainees within Victoria.

Funding for Group Training is the most cost effective way of ensuring apprentices complete their qualification in skills shortage trades whilst supporting small businesses.

Research says the group training network *“is one of the few parts of the vocational training system which is in regular contact with an extremely large number of employers, especially smaller employers”*<sup>1</sup>

Despite significant increases in costs and compliance requirements, the Victorian Governments financial contribution has not changed over the past decade and remains at a modest \$3.20 million with the same support from the commonwealth government – total funding allocated to the Victorian group training industry in 2013-14 is \$6.40 million.

As the legal employer, the Group Training Organisation is responsible for recruitment, wages / Industrial relations, work health and safety, insurance and ensuring apprentices / trainees and host employers have the support and flexibility they need.

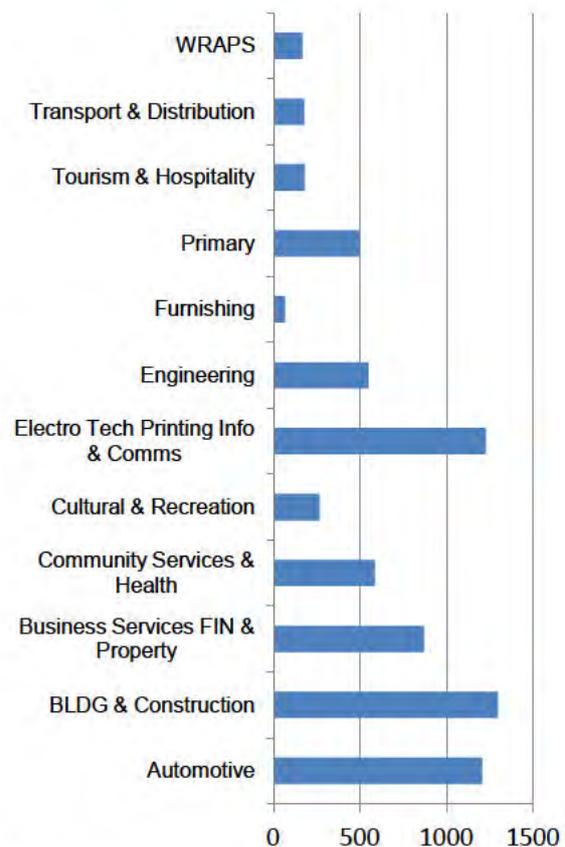
Group Training Organisations are the intermediaries between the complicated training system and small to medium enterprises, providing support for both employers and the apprentices through cost-effective recruitment, placement mentoring, and pastoral care all leading to successful completion of their qualification.

**The combination of on-and-off the job training provided through apprenticeships and traineeships provides the best foundation for skill development.**

Group Training Organisations *“help promote decent, sustainable work-based learning situations by facilitating a fairer sharing of the risks associated with employment and skill formation.”*<sup>2</sup>

More than 100,000 apprentices and trainees in Victoria have successfully completed their qualification with the assistance of group training over the past 30 years.

**GTO Apprentices “In Training” 2012/13**



*Number of apprentices undertaking employment and training through a GTO 2012-13. Source DEECD HESG June 2013.*

Currently there are many government funded programs aimed at achieving similar outcomes to improve apprenticeship completions. These programs funded at a State or Federal government level are not co-ordinated to maximise outcomes. Unfortunately they have increased confusion within the VET sector and with employers, parents and apprentices.

One particular example which has underperformed over the past 5 years is school based apprenticeships and traineeships. This sector has seen a multitude of training providers directly approach secondary schools to provide low cost / low quality training with little to no sustainable employment outcomes achieved.

We believe Group Training Organisations are very well positioned to provide a smoother transition from school through to meaningful employment as they have strong connections with local communities, schools and employers.

The Group Training Association of Victoria (GTAV) are appreciative of the support shown by the Victorian government over the past 3 years. In turn this paper puts forward a number of recommendations we believe will provide a better performing apprenticeship system.

## Recommendations

- 1. Proposed new school based program to support 10,000 student transitions into meaningful employment**
- 2. Victorian (and Federal government) long term support for JGTP Funding**
- 3. Future group training government funding structure**
- 4. Funding for training should be closely linked to an employment outcome regardless of the industry**

The Victorian group training network is confident that with increased resources, the sector can better support the governments focus to improve the transition from “school-to-work” for many young people, whilst also supporting skill shortage industries.

The Group Training Association of Victoria looks forward to discussing the points in this paper further.



**Gary Workman**  
Executive Director  
Group Training Association of Victoria



**Dean Luciani**  
Chair  
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## The value of Group Training

The Group Training Association of Victoria supports the Victorian government in its efforts in developing and maintaining a skilled, productive workforce. We are concerned that over the last decade Victoria has faced skills shortages while a high rate of young people have not been able to participate in the job market. Traineeship and apprenticeship numbers have fallen over the last 3 years.

The Victorian government needs to work closely with industry at a grass roots level to meet COAG targets, engage more with youth transitioning from school to work, and the wider working stakeholders in VET.

For more than 30 years, Group Training Organisations (GTOs) in Victoria have worked with local communities and industries to match young people with meaningful work and training. We have seen the rewards of quality training for individuals and businesses. We are committed to continue helping to address the dual challenges of high youth unemployment and skills shortages which occur throughout the state.

The combination of on-and-off the job training provided through apprenticeships and traineeships provide the best foundation for skills development.

### **Research says;**

*“Group training companies are highly adaptive and responsive to their policy and commercial environment.”<sup>3</sup>*

*“The most striking outcome of the survey of host employers was their very high level of satisfaction with the services provided by their group training companies.”<sup>3</sup>*

*“group training is a critical component in the Australian skill formation system.”<sup>3</sup>*



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## Making it easier for business to invest in skill development

Group training is an employment and training scheme recognised by the Apprenticeship Act 2001. In Victoria there are more than 8500 apprentices and trainees employed by Group Training Organisations in trades vital to the Victorian economy, such as electrical, plumbing, building and construction, metals and engineering, and the automotive industry. More young people are employed as apprentices and trainees through a Group Training Organisation than through any other single employer.

Many previous government reports have highlighted the important role GTOs play in supporting small to medium enterprises (SME).

65% of Victorian GTO apprentices are hosted by a SME. These small host employers rely heavily on the GTO with the initial recruitment / job matching, IR / payroll, the on-and-off the job training requirements (including competency based training) and work health and safety.

SMEs also enjoy the flexibility these agreements offer and are able to return the apprentice to the GTO as needed (over 15% of GTO apprentices are rotated to another host employer annually).

### Research says;

“Group Training Organisations help labour market arrangements work better and add new dimensions to their operation. They are especially important for:

- increasing levels of participation in employment-based training
- improving the quality of skill formation by ensuring better links between on-and-off the job training
- improving standards concerning wages, employment conditions and occupational health and safety
- improving access to employment-based training amongst disadvantaged job seekers”<sup>2</sup>



## Keeping apprentices in work

Until the 1990s, a large majority of apprentices were employed and trained by Government departments (local councils, water, energy, telecommunications and electrical services).

With the demands of budget constraints, “privatisation” and sub-contracting over many years the role of apprenticeship development has increasingly fallen to small to medium enterprises.

Through this period Group Training have maintained our commitment to training even when larger businesses and State government entities have not been able to do so. There are many risks associated with employing trade apprentices and GTOs work closely with more than 10,000 small to medium sized businesses to manage those risks each year.

Group training provides a safety net and flexibility for both the apprentice and host employer over the apprenticeship period (in many cases up to 4 years). In difficult economic times GTOs have kept apprentices in work and training, and made sure they can attend training while guaranteeing their wages. Group training ensures the steady supply of apprentices through economic peaks and troughs protecting the investment of government.

GTOs actively support:

- Those in disadvantaged categories who otherwise would struggle to find employment opportunities
- Small to medium enterprises who would not generally take on an apprentice or trainee because of the compliance costs and associated risks
- Businesses in regional and remote locations where finding suitable apprentices and trainees and retaining them can be far more challenging

### Research says;

*“Group Training Organisations are in a unique position in the vocational education space in that they provide a social safety net by shifting risk of non-completion and ‘training failure’ from host employers to themselves as the Group Training Organisation.”<sup>4</sup>*

Collectively Group Training Organisations are the largest employer of indigenous and youth with a disability, GTOs have the skill, capacity and understanding to support “at risk” youth including:

- Indigenous
- Long term unemployed
- Disengaged youth
- Women in non traditional trades
- Workplace language, literacy and numeracy (WELL)
- Culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD)
- People with a disability

**Group training provides a safety net and flexibility for both the apprentice and host employer over the apprenticeship period.**



## The Victorian government needs to continue to invest in group training

Funding for group training is the most cost effective way of ensuring apprentices complete their qualification in skills shortage trades. The financial support GTOs receive from the Victorian government is an important contribution to providing a safety net for thousands of apprentices and trainees and their small to medium sized employers. The Victorian governments' contribution to the Joint Group Training Program is \$3.20 million for 2012-2013 & 2013-14. This was matched by the Commonwealth government, but has not increased for over 10 years.

For the Victorian government to meet its goals of increasing the proportion of 20-24 year olds with qualifications and a meaningful employment pathway, the Victorian government will need the help of the group training industry.

Funding for group training had previously been budgeted in the Education portfolio. Currently, the work of GTOs straddles a number of different portfolios. This is not a task solely for the Department of Education but should be driven by the Department of Premier & Cabinet and involve Trade & Investment, Small Business, Finance and Regional Infrastructure & Services.

**For the Victorian government to meet its goals of increasing the proportion of 20-24 year olds with qualifications and a meaningful employment pathway, the Victorian government will need group training's assistance.**



## Recommendation 1:

### Proposed new school based program to support 10,000 student transitions into employment

By building on established best practice with the group training network, GTOs can assist government with school based students transitioning into employment with better targeted funding that rewards meaningful employment outcomes.

Many students enter a trade qualification without really understanding the day to day requirements of the job or any real understanding of the potential career pathways it may offer, which often results in non completion.

Our recommendation is to provide youth with an initial 12 months to explore a range of skills through existing structured VCAL units and supervised work experience. Only then can students make a better informed choice of their preferred apprenticeship pathway.

Group Training Association of Victoria (GTAV) believe this program would increase participation levels and improve retention and completion rates dramatically.

**10,000 additional school based apprentices across Victoria at a cost of \$15 million over 3 years**

The Queensland government recently announced a similar program to this recommendation (*Great Skills. Real Opportunities – school to trade pathway program May 2013*). With the goal to improve VET pathways and career advice while forming stronger connections between schools, the VET sector and local employers through utilisation of the group training network across the state.

#### Research says;

*“An expansion of prevocational courses... to act as a feeder mechanism for employment in group training companies could be warranted as a means of exposing prospective apprentices and trainees to the type and conditions of work they can expect.”<sup>3</sup>*

GTAV propose to support over 10,000 students across Victoria over an initial 3 year period.

Industry	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	Total 3 year program
Building & Construction	900	1100	1100	3100
Engineering	600	800	800	2200
Automotive	600	700	700	2000
Electrical	350	400	400	1150
Hospitality	50	100	100	250
Aged Care Child Care & Health Services	250	400	400	1050
Transport & Logistics	50	100	100	250
Total	2800	3600	3600	10000

Table 1: Expected breakdown by Industry Qualification

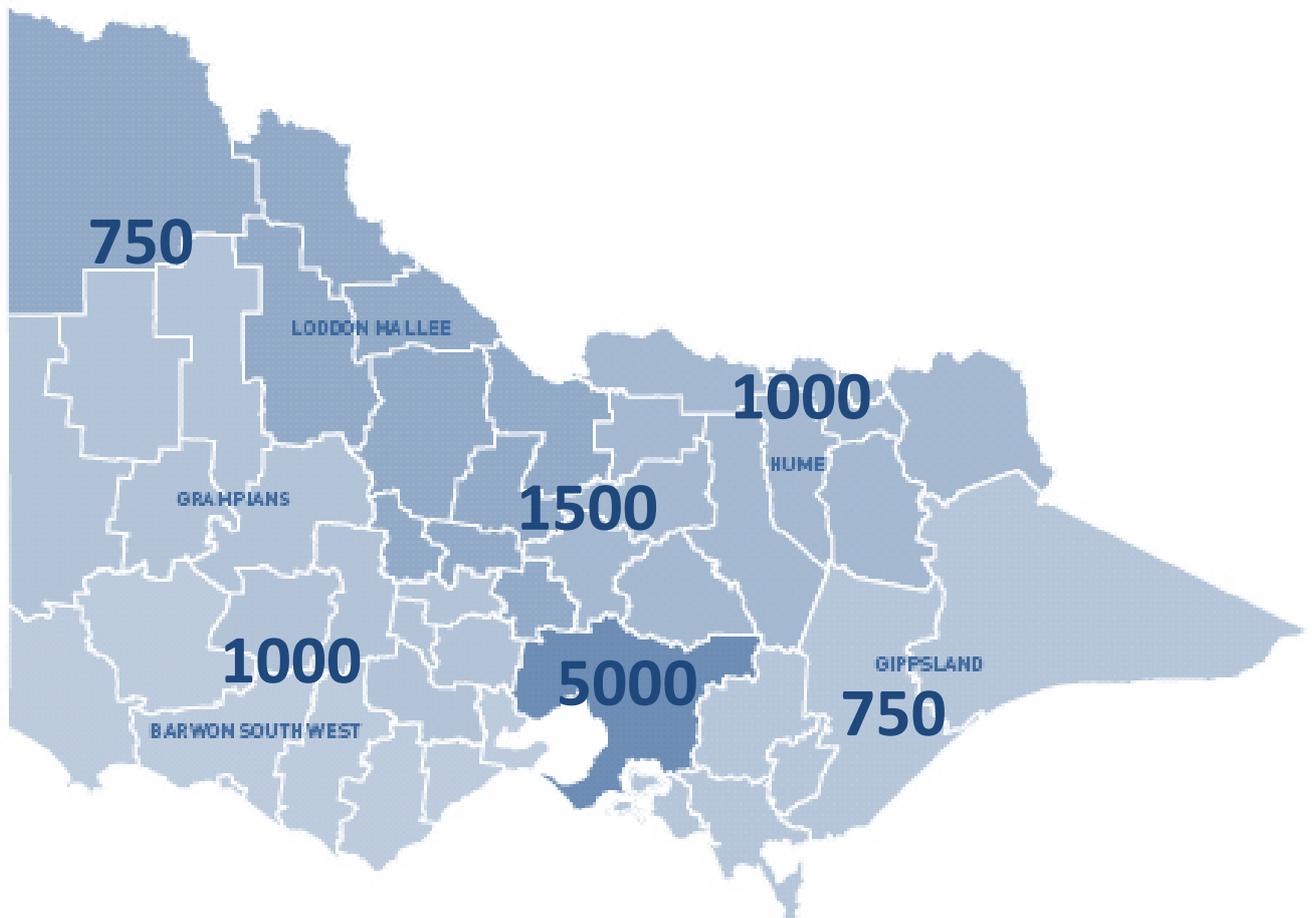


## The proposed delivery model

Year 10 – 11	Year 11 – 12	Transition into Employment
<b>VCAL</b> Industry Specific Skills strand or Work Related Skills strand	⇒ <b>School based apprenticeship / traineeship (SBAT)</b>	⇒ <b>Apprenticeship / Traineeship</b>
Themed VCAL programs (skill shortage areas) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engineering</li> <li>• Electrical</li> <li>• Automotive</li> <li>• Business</li> <li>• Building and Construction</li> </ul> Student selection into a themed area – 12 months with min. 3 work experience placements Industry based research/project work Additional LLN as required	⇒ Student selection into a specific trade apprenticeship SBAT (Once successfully completed VCAL) employment through GTO for additional support to student and host employer  VCAL credit towards qualification Cert III Trade Qual commenced VET RTO funded training	⇒ Continuation with apprenticeship post secondary school (through GTO or direct employer)  2-3 years to complete trade qualification depending on competency based training and student progression
<b>Government funding</b> Victorian Government \$1500/placement to support employer, GTO, and placement / work experience costs.  Funding from secondary schools will need to follow student into trade training area.	⇒ Commonwealth apprentice employment incentives passed onto employers  Employer to pay student award salary during work placement periods (average \$10-13/hr)	⇒ Commonwealth apprentice employment incentives passed onto employers  Employer to pay student award salary and training costs (as per specific industry award conditions)
<b>GTO Support Matching, Monitoring and Mentoring</b> Additional career advice within schools GTO to manage “work experience” component through various host employers Support to local schools and parents OH&S support for student and host employer	⇒ GTO to support student and employer through early phases of training and work placement (initial 12 months)  OH&S support for student and host employer	⇒ Continuation with apprenticeship post secondary school (through GTO or direct employer)
<b>Program benefits</b> Greater support for secondary schools looking for career pathway options Greater participant numbers (especially in regional areas) Ability to “try” various industries before committing to a specific trade / apprenticeship Utilising existing curriculum resources Support from VCAA	⇒ Greater retention rates Support from Industry employers & GTOs Employers are able to access students with a higher level of understanding of the trade GTOs to provide mentor and career advice services to schools and employers	⇒ Greater retention & completion rates

Regional Location	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	Total 3 year program
Metropolitan Melbourne	1400	1800	1800	5000
Victorian North / East region (Hume)	300	350	350	1000
Gippsland region	200	275	275	750
Victorian North / West region (Loddon Mallee)	200	275	275	750
Victorian South / West region (Grampians & Barwon South West)	300	350	350	1000
Victorian Central region	400	550	550	1500
	2800	3600	3600	10000

Table 2: Expected breakdown by geographical location over 3 years



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## Recommendation 2:

### Victorian (and Federal government) long term support for JGTP funding

Over the past 3 years GTOs have entered into new financial years without knowing whether government funding will continue. (During the 2012-13 year GTOs did not receive performance contracts until December – 5 months into a new contract period – and were not paid their 1<sup>st</sup> quarter payment until May (11 months after the commencement of the contract date). This level of ongoing uncertainty does not assist our industry to confidently operate and plan for the future.

GTAV would welcome a long term commitment from the Victorian government which we believe will also improve payment processes and the ability for our industry to make a longer term commitment to local programs and resources.

Many Victorian GTOs are registered “not for profit” organisations that work on thin margins. The ongoing delay in contracts and government funding can have a dramatic impact on cash flow and forward planning. GTAV believe the current funding uncertainty is negatively impacting our industry and the ability to provide the best possible employment and customer service to young people and host employers.

GTAV would welcome a long term commitment from the Victorian government.



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## Recommendation 3:

### Future group training government funding structure

The Victorian government has not reviewed the total level of funding provided to Group Training Organisations over the past 10 years.

During this same period the administration and reporting aspects have dramatically increased at a State and Commonwealth level, with minor changes made to “incentivise” GTOs to support disadvantaged / equity cohorts.

Any changes to group training government payment structures need to reflect the true cost of delivery and support government and employer priorities.

Future direction of GTO funding will need to be financially costed correctly as any minor increases towards equity cohorts will not change the behaviour, nor increase support or participant numbers within these groups.

The industry would strongly support a government payment structure that provided adequate support / payment for;

- > **Commencement payments**  
*(Assessment, matching, vocational guidance, selection and induction)*
- > **Completion payments**  
*(Monitoring & mentoring services)*
- > **Rotations** *(movement from host employer to host employer as required – case management, host employer consulting / training)*
- > **Regional support**
- > **Equity groups**
  - > Women in non traditional trades
  - > Indigenous
  - > Long term unemployed
  - > Youth at risk (re-engagement)
- > **Skill shortage trades**

**GTO funding will need to be financially costed correctly as any minor increases towards equity cohorts will not change the behaviour or increase support.**

The GTAV support the removal of existing “progression” payments as this would also support the Victorian and Commonwealth governments’ drive towards competency based training.



## Recommendation 4:

### Funding for training should be closely linked to an employment outcome regardless of the industry

Recent changes to the Victorian Training Guarantee in 2012 have reduced the number of people in training that were not linked to a real sustainable employment opportunity, however many traditional pathways for young women have also been caught up in these changes.

GTOs have had a long history of providing an employment pathway for many young females each year through a business traineeship. (consistently between 1100-1220 pa.) The current funding available for this pathway has significantly reduced employment options for many regional and financially struggling employers and females looking to enter employment.

Funding should be closely linked to an employment outcome regardless of the industry sector – government funding for training should be prioritised for new employees and employers looking to train.

Many traditional pathways for young females have also been caught up in recent VET funding changes.



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## Appendix

### Background – The Victorian Group Training industry

For more than 30 years, Group Training Organisations (GTOs) in Victoria have worked with local communities and industries to match young people with meaningful work. We have seen the rewards of quality training for individuals and businesses. We are committed to continuing to help address the dual challenges of high youth unemployment and skills shortages which occur throughout the State.

The combination of on-and-off the job training provided through apprenticeships and traineeships provide the best foundation for skills development.



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## Group Training in the Media

### How to prosper in long run

Published: "The Age". October 21, 2013

#### ■ Gary Workman

With the VCE looming, we should reflect on how well we are preparing these new adults to make the decisions that await them. The transition from school to work or study is notoriously difficult. More than 16 per cent of students at Victorian universities will drop out of their courses in the first year, and only half the people who undertake apprenticeships or traineeships in Victoria ever see them through to the end.

More information and experience about what awaits them in training and in work could help young people better choose and prepare for the qualifications they undertake. This would significantly improve training and education completion rates and save students' time and education funding.

Many young people have fixed views on the requirements of various industries and are making decisions for themselves based on preconceived ideas that are often inaccurate or out of date. The focus on high VCE scores with university as the goal can come at the expense of better information about trades.

For new entrants into apprenticeships and traineeships, their perceptions of many trades have not kept up with reality. Technology has transformed industries beyond recognition.

Most young people who successfully complete their apprenticeship or traineeship have insight into the nature of the work they are signing themselves up for.

Helping all young people understand the changing world of work could significantly improve their experience of obtaining a qualification and subsequently working in their chosen field.

For education policymakers, encouraging young people to complete an apprenticeship or traineeship is a key focus, and the success of vocational education programs is judged on this.

Too often non-completion is blamed on apprentice and trainee-level pay. But if that is the case, university dropout rates should be near 100 per cent, because people spend a comparable period at university with no pay. As with their university counterparts, many apprentices who don't manage to complete have found themselves pushed to enrol in a

qualification before they understand the demands of the qualification and the time commitment that will be required.

But for apprentices and trainees, the consequences of non-completion are much more serious than the obvious and unfortunate failure to progress their careers.

The current structure of state government funding for training, the Victorian Training Guarantee, is inflexible and once it has been used up - say in subsidising a multi-year training course - it runs out. Young people who want to change to a different training opportunity may not be able to receive additional funding; once they've used up their allotted guarantee on one opportunity, they could be left unsupported.

The problem has been compounded by profit-seeking registered training organisations, which have been known to push young people into signing up to qualifications without ensuring they have a proper understanding of the industries or providing a job at the end. Direct funding at the beginning of the placement doesn't necessarily result in a long-term position, and the unprepared are at risk of losing out entirely.

This unhelpful funding model needs to be changed to offer young people a better understanding of the industry they are qualifying for and more flexibility to change paths along the way.

We need to be teaching students about the options that are available to them while they are in years 9-11 at school, when they are forming their ideas of what they'd like to do. Pre-apprenticeship programs and school-based opportunities to learn about the transition to work are essential. This is why the Group Training Association of Victoria is working on a program to offer Victorians aged 14 to 17 an opportunity to learn about industries and trades. This will alleviate the pressure on young people to commit to a program they don't fully understand, and give them a more accurate idea of what a future job entails.

**Gary Workman is executive director of the Group Training Association of Victoria.**

*This story was found at:*

<http://www.theage.com.au/national/education/how-to-prosper-in-long-run-20131019-2vsza.html>

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## Background – Group Training Association of Victoria

The Group Training Association of Victoria (GTAV) is the peak industry body representing not for profit Group Training Organisations (GTOs) across Victoria and is part of a national network of group training associations.

Within Victoria GTAV members employ over 8,500 apprentices and trainees across all industry sectors – the network comprises 10,000+ host employers in small to medium size businesses across Victoria.

GTAV provides support services to build the quality, professionalism and capability of the network; and it offers leadership to its members through advocacy, negotiation and policy setting at both the State and National level. These functions are achieved by working with governments, government departments, industry associations, industry training boards, skills councils and unions as well as individual enterprises.

GTAV Network Groups include;

- > Training Managers / Registered Training Organisations
- > OH&S Officers / Managers / Consultants
- > Field Officers / Consultants
- > Financial Officers / Payroll
- > GTO Managers
- > GTO Quality Assurance / National Standards
- > Workforce Development
- > E-Learning & Technology

GTAV have also developed a **research and policy capacity** specialising in issues related to employment, apprenticeships, traineeships, school to work transition, and the broader vocational education agenda.

**GTAV promotes innovation, professional development and critical awareness** as the mechanisms to assist in coping with and utilising change.

GTAV is unique in that it represents a network which not only spans the state of Victoria geographically and across different industries, but represents an *integrated* network that has developed in a planned and structured way. An enduring asset achieved as a result of this planned process is a **well developed and cohesive communication network**. Since GTAV's inception this communication network has developed so that it can deal with both operational and policy issues, and can do this at all levels of group training operations.

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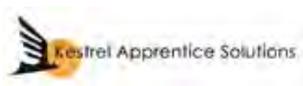


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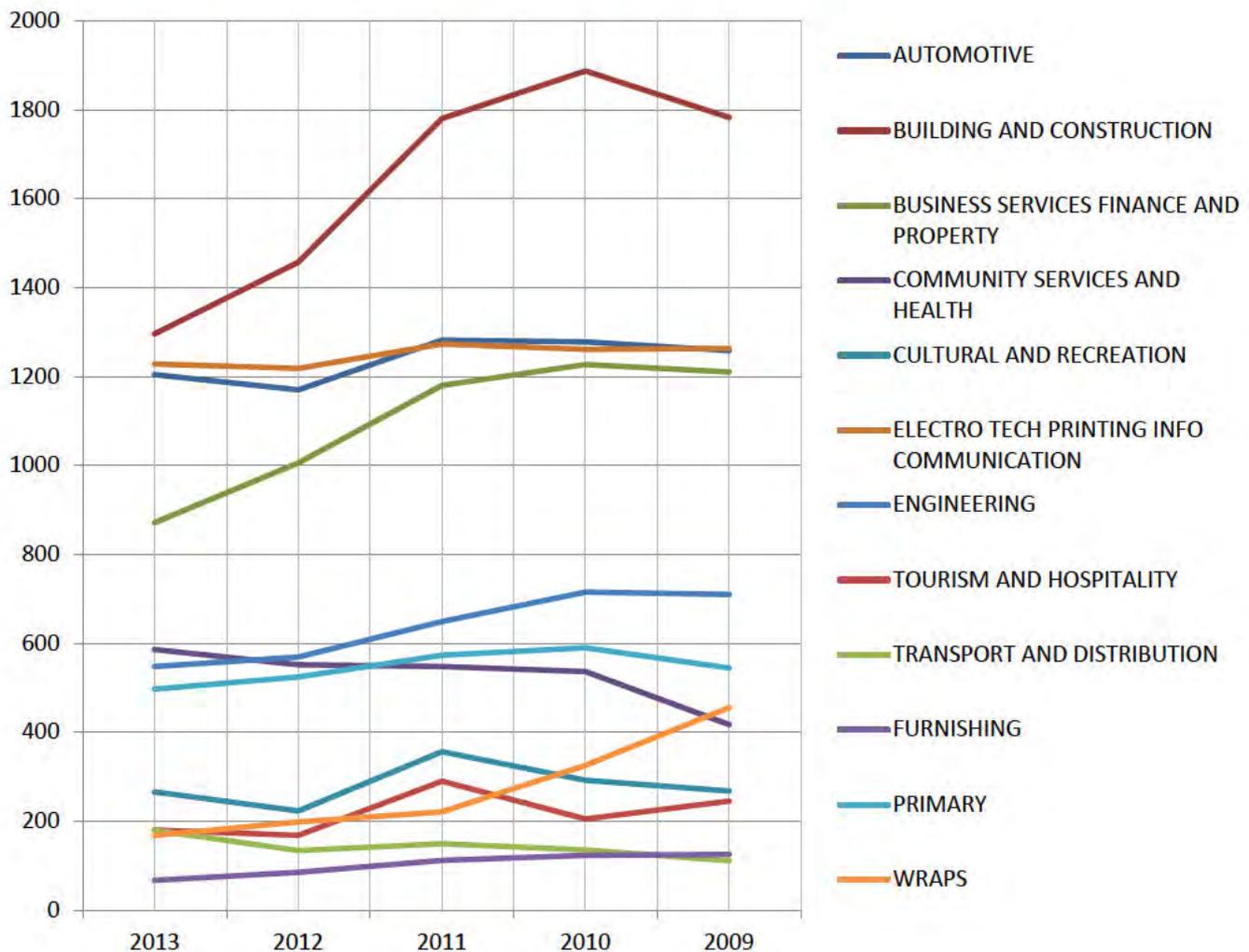
## GTAV Members



## GTAV affiliate members



## 2009 – 2013 Victorian Group Training Industry Performance



<b>GTO Total In Training by Industry</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2009</b>
Automotive	1204	1170	1282	1278	1258
Building and Construction	1296	1457	1780	1887	1783
Business Services Finance and Property	871	1006	1180	1227	1210
Community Services and Health	586	552	548	536	417
Cultural and Recreation	266	223	356	292	268
Electro Tech Printing Info Communication	1228	1218	1273	1261	1263
Engineering	548	569	649	715	710
Tourism and Hospitality	180	168	290	205	245
Transport and Distribution	179	134	149	135	111
Furnishing	67	85	112	123	125
Primary	497	524	573	590	544
WRAPS	168	198	221	325	455

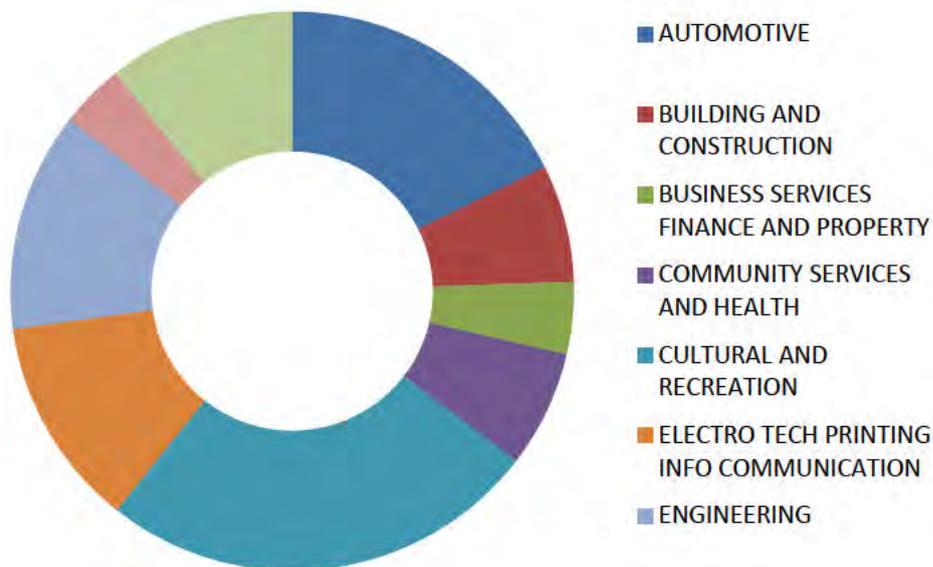
Number of apprentices undertaking employment and training through a GTO 2009-2013.  
Source DEECD HESG June 2013.

## 2012- 2013 Victorian Group Training Industry Performance

### GTO Contribution

Victorian GTOs have always provided a large number of apprentices and trainees over the past 30 years, especially in traditional trade areas.

**Collectively Victorian Group Training Organisations are the largest employer of apprentices and trainees.**



	GTO		Non GTO		GTO contribution
	2013	2012	2013	2012	2013
<b>Total In Training</b>					
Automotive	1204	1170	6390	6465	18.84 %
Building and Construction	1296	1457	17953	17988	7.22 %
Business Services Finance and Property	871	1006	19610	27199	4.44 %
Community Services and Health	586	552	8142	8406	7.20 %
Cultural and Recreation	266	223	988	2045	26.92 %
Electro Tech Printing Info Communication	1228	1218	9493	9072	12.94 %
Engineering	548	569	4058	4195	13.50 %
Furnishing	67	85	1707	1714	3.93 %
Primary	497	524	4326	4282	11.49 %

*GTO contribution 2012-2013. Apprentices in Training Statistics. Source DEECD HESG June 2013.*

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GTAV Board and members, Dr Peter Waterhouse, Group Training Association of NSW & ACT and Thought Brokers





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